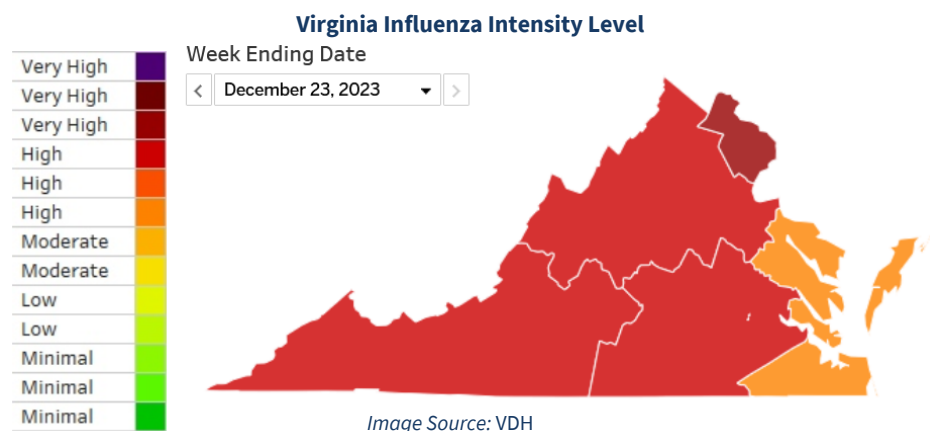
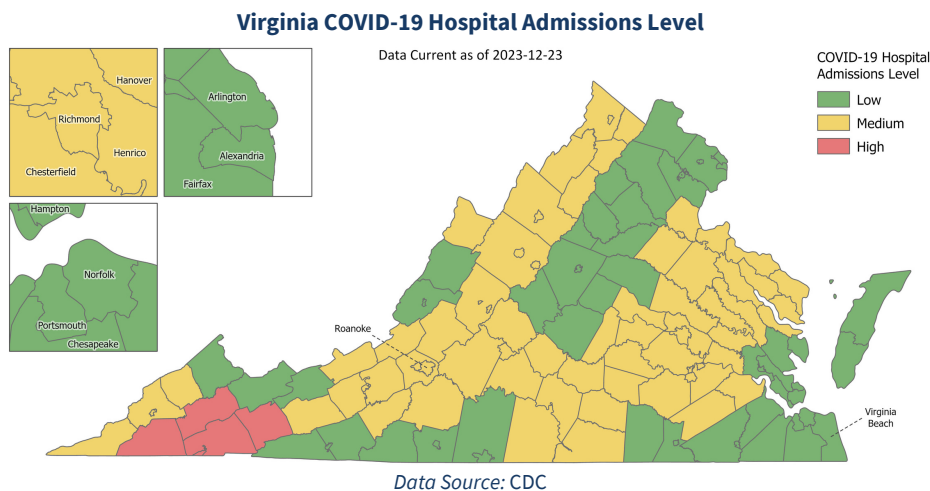


December 29, 2023

Key Takeaways

- COVID-19 continues to increase in Virginia. ED diagnosis rates and hospital admissions are at the highest levels seen since February of 2023. Yet, they are still significantly lower than last year's peak.
- CDC forecasts suggest that COVID-19 hospitalizations will level off in the coming weeks. Statewide admissions levels are still classified as "low". More than half of Virginia localities, covering over 40% of the population, now report "medium" or "high" admissions rates.
- Flu activity is increasing sharply. Statewide influenza activity is now "very high". Flu hospital admissions have almost tripled in the last month. Models suggest that flu hospital admissions will continue to grow until mid-January.
- Norovirus detections continue to increase across the region.
- RSV activity in Virginia has dropped for three weeks in a row.

Key Figures



COVID-19

Low

Characterization of statewide COVID-19 hospital admissions and hospital occupancy as of December 23.

2% / 39%

Population in localities with "High" / "Medium" COVID-19 hospital admissions levels as of December 23.

Influenza

Very High

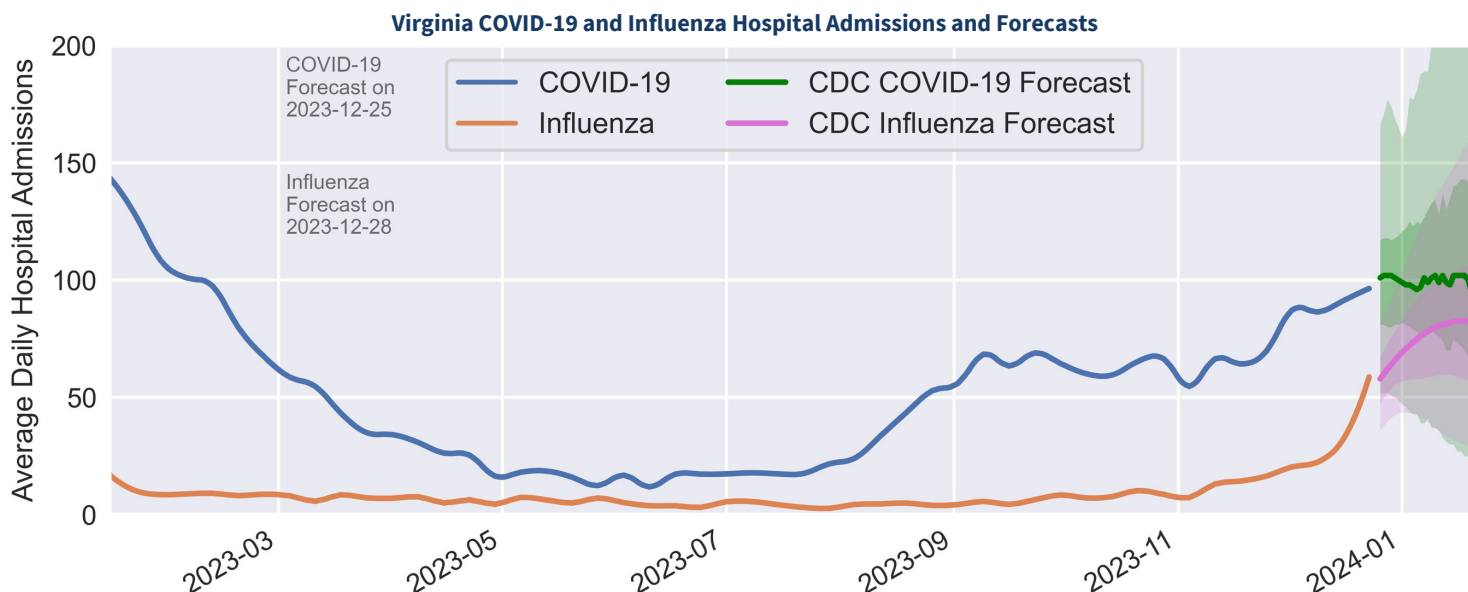
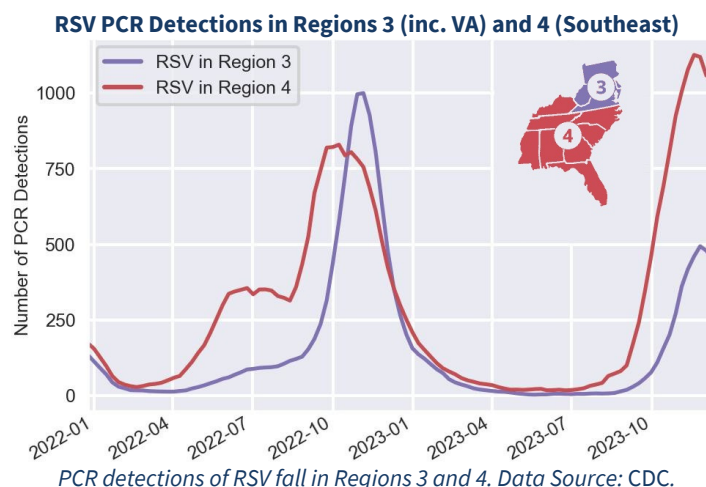
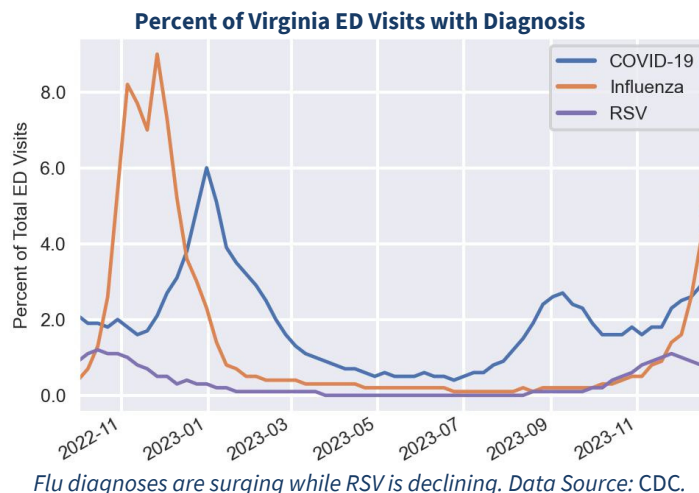
Statewide influenza activity levels in Virginia, as of Dec 23.

5

Virginia regions with Very High or High influenza intensity levels, as of December 23.

Seasonal Illness

- **Upswing of COVID-19 activity in Virginia.** COVID-19 diagnoses at EDs increased by 30% in the last week and are at the highest level seen since January.
- **Influenza activity increased sharply in Virginia.** The statewide flu intensity level is now “Very High”, and no region in the Commonwealth reports less than “High” activity.
- **Hospital admissions up for both flu and COVID-19.** COVID-19 hospital admissions increased 5.5% this week, while flu hospital admissions increased by about 80%. CDC forecasts suggest that flu-associated hospitalizations will continue to increase through mid-January. COVID-19 admissions are expected to level off in the coming weeks.
- **RSV on a slow decline in Virginia.** PCR detections of the virus in HHS Region 3 (including Virginia) have decreased for three weeks in a row. The same is true of the RSV diagnosis rate in Virginian EDs. Yet, RSV rates remain significantly elevated.
- **Vaccinations for COVID-19 and RSV lag behind flu shots.** This trend is seen among adults in the general public as well as in nursing home residents.
- **Norovirus growth continues globally.** Outbreaks are being reported in California, New Jersey, and the United Kingdom. PCR detections of norovirus in Census Region 1 (including Virginia) are at the highest rate seen since May.



Other News

- **The United Kingdom Health Security Agency issued a warning about ‘extremely drug-resistant *Shigella*.’** Cases, which have mostly occurred among men who have sex with men, are 24% above the prepandemic baseline in the UK. Cases have been reported in at least three additional European nations, including 65 cases in the Netherlands.
- **Three city mayors called for a federal emergency declaration in response to an increase in migrants.** The mayors of New York City, Chicago, and Denver are seeking financial and other support to manage the influx of migrants.
- **Supply chain concerns have eased.** Major shipping companies have begun routing ships through the Red Sea again, following the announcement of a maritime security initiative in the region.
- **Europe follows China with increase in *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* detections.** The increase has been affecting China since May, while six European countries have reported increasing levels this fall. Increases are thought to be linked to reduced population immunity following COVID-19 interventions.
- **2023 expected to be the hottest year on record.** Every month from June to November in 2323 was the hottest recorded. The prior eight years were already the hottest eight on record.
- **Alberta Canada is experiencing a pertussis outbreak.** The province experienced 831 cases in 2023, through Dec 11. The outbreak is linked to low vaccination rates, with 88.3% of cases occurring among unimmunized or partially immunized individuals.